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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS AND
WORK-TO-FAMILY CONFLICT: THE ROLE OF SELF-CONTROL

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Psychology

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Michelle Klinker

December 2019

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The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Thesis Titled

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS AND
WORK-TO-FAMILY CONFLICT: THE ROLE OF SELF-CONTROL

by

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December 2019

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS AND WORK-TO-FAMILY CONFLICT: THE ROLE OF SELF-CONTROL

by Michelle Klinker

The purpose of the current study was to examine the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work-to-family conflict. Previous research has not yet examined the possible moderating impact of personal characteristics on this relationship. Therefore, this study also examined self-control as a moderator of the relationship between flexible work arrangements and employees' experience of work-to-family conflict. A total of 131 participants participated in an on-line survey. Results showed that those who had flexplace and flextime available to them in their organizations tended to experience less work-to-family conflict than those who did not have flexplace and flextime available to them. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between flextime and work-to-family conflict such that those who utilized flextime three or more days a week experienced more work-to-family conflict than those who did not use flextime. However, results showed that self-control did not moderate the relationship between flexplace use and flextime use on work-to-family conflict. These results suggest that the availability of flexible work arrangements might be enough to reduce work-to-family conflict and that self-control may not have an influence on the level of work-to-family conflict among those who used flexible work arrangements. It is suggested that companies should make known to their employees that they have flexible work arrangements available to them, and if companies are to offer employees flextime, it may be beneficial to set limits or guidelines for use.

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Introduction

Since the early 1960s, an increasing proportion of women have entered the workforce, which has altered home life for many people (Toossi & Morisi, 2017). The increased prevalence of dual-breadwinner families and single parents has led to new family dynamics as the division between gender roles has changed, making the relationship between work and family demands more complex (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991). Unsurprisingly, the competing demands of work and family lead to conflict between the two roles (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). However, the increase in work-family conflict has been accompanied by a focus on creating work-life balance for employees. Many organizations have started implementing flexibility in the workplace as a resource for employees with the hope of reducing their experience of work-family conflict.

Flexible work arrangements are defined as work options that allow an employee flexibility regarding when and where work is performed (Rau & Hyland, 2002). Flexible work arrangements can be divided into flexplace and flextime. Flexplace refers to variations in the locations in which employees perform their work, whereas flextime indicates a shift in the hours an employee works (Allen, Johnson, Kiburz, & Shockley, 2013). Therefore, should an employee utilize flexplace, they would work their typical eight-hour day in a location outside of the office. Alternatively, with flextime, an employee will still work eight hours a day; however, they will complete these in nonstandard hours (outside of the nine to five schedule) (Allen et al., 2013).

Flexible work arrangements have received a great amount of attention as potential solutions to work-family conflict. They were even noted in a White House report as a method by which to help reduce work and family conflict (Executive Office of the President Council of Economic Advisors, 2014). However, the current literature indicates inconsistent findings regarding the impact of flexible work arrangements on work-family conflict and raises the question of whether they are beneficial for reducing work-family conflict (Allen et al., 2013). For example, Allen et al. (2013) found flexplace availability was related to a decrease in the experience of work-to-family conflict such that those who had the option to utilize a flexible schedule at work were likely to experience a reduced amount of work-to-family conflict. Though the positive impacts of flexible work arrangements are more commonly touted, there is some evidence of downsides to flexible work arrangements. For example, Pickshaus, Schmitthenner, and Urban (2001) found the use of flexible work arrangements led to the experience of work intensification or an increase in workload and involuntary working time extensions or the unintentional increase in worked hours.

Some potential reasons for these inconsistent findings are the various conceptualizations of flexible work arrangements and the lack of distinction in different forms of work-family conflict (Allen et al., 2013). For example, as mentioned earlier, flexible work arrangements can be differentiated into flextime and flexplace. Each flexible work arrangement can also be differentiated into flexibility use (actual use of flexible work arrangement) and flexibility availability (availability of flexible work arrangement). Work-family conflict can also be differentiated into work interfering with

family (work-to-family conflict) and family interfering with work (family-to-work conflict).

Allen et al. (2013) argued that different conceptualizations of flexible work arrangements led to different impacts on different types of work-family conflict. More specifically, Allen et al. (2013) found a small effect of flexplace availability on family-to-work conflict, but no significant relationship between flexible working arrangements (flexplace use, flextime use, and flextime availability) and family-to-work conflict. The results indicated that some work arrangements set by employers did not help to reduce stress from family life that impacted work. Further, Allen et al. (2013) found that flextime had a stronger negative effect on work-to-family conflict than did flexplace. Additionally, flexplace use was found to be more effective at reducing work-family conflict than flexplace availability, whereas flextime availability was more negatively related to work interfering with family than flextime use.

These findings indicate that different types of work family arrangements have different impacts on the various forms of work-family conflict. Therefore, the importance of distinguishing between the variations of flexible work arrangements and forms of work-family conflict has been emphasized by researchers including Allen et al. (2013) in order to more clearly understand the impact of flexible work arrangements on work-family conflict. Allen et al. (2013) stressed the importance of separating the facets of flexible work arrangements and clearly defining what is being measured in both flexible work arrangements and work-family conflict.

Allen et al. (2013) also called for further examination of moderators of the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work-to-family conflict in order to more comprehensively understand the differential impacts of flexible work arrangements on work-family conflict. More specifically, they called for further exploration of personal characteristics as influences on the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work-family conflict. One such personal characteristic is self-control, defined as a resistance to distraction and impulse control (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Self-control was of interest to Allen et al. (2013) as they believed it could contribute to understanding individual differences in the outcomes of flexible work arrangements. Therefore, this study explores the relationship between flexible work arrangements, in the form of flexplace and flextime availability as well as flexplace and flextime use, and work-to-family conflict, and whether self-control moderates the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work-to-family conflict.

The following sections present the definition and forms of work-family conflict and review the literature on antecedents and consequences of work-family conflict. The definition of flexible work arrangements and the various forms in which it is offered will then be discussed, followed by the benefits of flexible work arrangements, and finally moderators of the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work-to-family conflict. The review leads to the hypotheses of this study examining the impact of flexible work arrangements on work-to-family conflict and the role an individual's level of self-control plays in the relationship.

Work-Family Conflict

The construct of work-family conflict has been around for many decades. Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) identified the conflict experienced between work roles and other life roles as a cause of strain for one-third of the men in their national sample. Kahn et al. (1964) defined role conflict as two competing demands that cause strain as attention to one demand makes the second more difficult to manage. Based on Kahn et al. (1964), Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) described work-family conflict as a form of inter-role conflict in which the pressures of home life and pressures of work life are mutually incompatible.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggested that work-family conflict may arise through time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based conflict. Time-based conflict may arise when the roles compete for an individual's time where the engagement in one activity leads to an inability to participate in another. For example, spending more hours in the workplace means an individual has fewer hours to dedicate to the home domain, causing some form of conflict. Strain-based conflict occurs when the demands of one role deplete an individual's personal resources and lead to the experience of anxiety, apathy, and irritability, compromising the ability to perform in another domain. This may occur when a low level of support and a high level of ambiguity in the workplace cause stress in an individual, which then leads to negative outcomes (anxiety, fatigue, apathy) that carry over to the family domain. Finally, behavior-based conflict occurs when a pattern of behavior in one role does not fit the other role, and an individual is unable to adapt

between the two. For example, the kindness and warmth of a mother may not be effective behavior in a high-paced, masculine business environment.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggested that participation in one domain subsequently creates conflict for participation in the other. Strain is experienced when pressures from both the home and work domains are salient to the individual and require some form of action or involvement. The literature encompassing work-family conflict also differentiates between the direction of the effects: family interfering with work and work interfering with family.

Directions of work-family conflict. Early research of the construct of work-life conflict did not distinguish between the direction of conflict. However, as work and family are considered separate domains of a person's life, the need to examine the impact in both directions was identified. A meta-analysis of work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict found that although there was overlap in examination of the two concepts, they were unique enough to be studied independently (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). The distinction of family-to-work conflict from work-to-family conflict is important as researchers have agreed that the antecedents leading to the experience of family-to-work conflict differ from those of work-to-family conflict. Thus, researchers have distinguished the bi-directional nature of the relationship by defining both family-to-work conflict and work-to-family conflict; these are also referred to as family interference with work and work interference with family, respectively (Allen et al., 2013; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005).

Family-to-work conflict. Family-to-work conflict can be viewed as a form of inter-role conflict where the demands of time devoted to and strain created by family interfere with the performance of work-related responsibilities (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). It is generally agreed that stressors related to the family role, such as family-role demands, ambiguity, and/or overload, are more likely to impact feelings of family-to-work conflict than work-to-family conflict (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). Grandey and Cropanzano (1999) also found that family-to-work conflict was more strongly related to non-work stressors such as the number of children at home and their age than was work-to-family conflict.

Researchers have further investigated various aspects of personal life that contribute to the experience of family-to-work conflict. Studies have found that being a primary caregiver for younger children as opposed to older children contributes more strongly to the experience of family-to-work conflict (Beutell & Greenhaus, 1980). Additionally, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggested that those with spouses had greater family-to-work conflict compared to those who were single. This is likely because those with spouses have an additional demand in their personal lives, resulting in fewer personal resources for work. These results were also found to be stronger and more directly related for women as they were more often splitting their time between the family and work domains than men.

Work-to-family conflict. Work-to-family conflict is a form of interrole conflict in which the time required of the job, the strain created, and the overall demands of the job interfere with the performance of family roles (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Such a conflict

may occur when individuals are required to spend more hours working, detracting from their availability to support those at home. This could come in the form of missed school pickups for children or emotional unavailability for a partner at home.

Antecedents of work-to-family conflict reside within the work domain as opposed to the family domain (Allen et al., 2013). For example, having more stress, conflict, pressure, and involvement at work has been found to lead to the experience of work-to-family conflict (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). As there are fewer resources available for the home domain, an individual may experience role conflict as the work role creates stress manifesting in the family role (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Kahn et al., 1964). Therefore, these two roles become less compatible in some manner leading to the experience of work-family conflict for some (Kahn et al., 1964).

In their review, Eby et al. (2005) found a greater prevalence of work-to-family conflict than family-to-work conflict, thus supporting the need to continue investigating work-to-family conflict. Further, with the inclusion of more women in the workforce, the reported amount of work-to-family conflict has become a more relevant issue, leading organizations to seek solutions that signal their interest in relieving this pressure (Thompson, Payne, & Taylor, 2015). As flexible work arrangements have been found to have greater impact on work-to-family conflict than family-to-work conflict (Thompson et al., 2015), this study focuses on how flexible work arrangements impact work-to-family conflict.

Consequences of Work-Family Conflict

Though family-to-work conflict and work-to-family conflict have been differentiated from one another, they have some shared consequences on the lives of individuals. Both conflicts are defined by the perception of insufficient time and energy to successfully perform in both the work and family domains. This perception has been associated with negative life outcomes for individuals (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). For example, Amsted, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, and Semmer (2011) found that work-to-family conflict reduced positive work attitudes such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction and increased negative psychological states such as psychological strain and depression. Both work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict have been found to predict tardiness, absenteeism, family-related interruptions at work, and intention to leave an organization (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005).

Other researchers have found that work-to-family conflict leads to negative life-related outcomes outside of the work domain. These include family dissatisfaction, tension between work and family, depression, and life stress (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1991). Though family-to-work conflict and work-to-family conflict have some common outcomes for individuals, the relationship between work-to-family conflict and negative outcomes has been found to be stronger and more common than the relationship between family-to-work conflict and negative outcomes (Allen et al., 2013). Therefore, researchers have put more focus into identifying the antecedents of work-to-family conflict.

Antecedents of Work-to-Family Conflict

As detailed above, work-to-family conflict is positively related to work role demands such as excessive work hours or behavior-based role requirements. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) found that the number of hours worked per week and the number of hours commuted per week were positively related to work-to-family conflict. Additionally, Pleck, Stainess, and Lang (1980) found that the number of hours worked per week and an inflexibility in the work schedule were more likely to lead to work-to-family conflict. When work roles become too demanding, the stress from attempting to accommodate both work and family roles causes a sense of conflict (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Further, the number of children in the home and their ages has been found to contribute to work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict (Nomaguchi & Fetto, 2018).

As many factors have been found to be related to work-to-family conflict, the focus has shifted to determine variables that are resources for managing work-to-family conflict. The offering of flexible work arrangements has been conceptualized as a resource an organization can provide to employees to help them cope with the competing demands of the work and family domains (Thompson et al., 2015). This study focuses on flexible work arrangements as resources for employees in helping to reduce the experience of work-to-family conflict.

Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible work arrangements are defined as work options that allow employees flexibility surrounding when and where work is performed (Rau & Hyland, 2002). Flexible work arrangements have been increasing in popularity as a solution to balancing

work and family demands. Workplace flexibility was originally implemented in an effort to help reduce commute congestion and has since been adopted as a resource for employees (Hicks & Klimoski, 1981). Some organizations utilize flexibility as a way to attract potential applicants as it is viewed as an organizational resource (Thompson et al., 2015). Flexible work arrangements can indicate that employers are aware of their employees' demands outside of work and hence they can be perceived as resources to prospective employees (Grover & Crooker, 1995). Therefore, the offering of flexible work arrangements is beneficial to organizations attempting to recruit top talent (Thompson et al., 2015).

Beyond the attractiveness of flexibility, researchers have also found a relationship between flexibility and positive outcomes for individuals in relation to their organization. In a meta-analytic review of flextime and employee outcomes, Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, and Neuman (1999) found that flextime was related to employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, absenteeism, and productivity. Thus, employees who were provided with flextime had greater job satisfaction, lower levels of absenteeism, and higher productivity. These employee outcomes such as lower absenteeism and productivity benefit organizations as employees are producing at a higher level and present in their roles, resulting in higher return on investments for the organization (Lee & Devoe, 2012).

There are many forms of flexible work arrangements that have been studied, including telework, flexplace, flextime, and compressed work weeks (Thompson et al., 2015). Telework and flexplace alter the location in which work is performed, while flextime refers to temporal differences regarding when work is completed (Allen et al.,

2013). Compressed work weeks are policies that require the same number of hours each week, however, the hours can be worked in less than the traditional number of work days (Allen et al., 2013). Two of the most common forms of flexible work arrangements are flexplace and flextime and although they are sometimes offered in partnership, they remain separate concepts.

Flexplace and flextime. Flexplace, also sometimes referred to as telecommuting, pertains to the location in which work is performed (Rau & Hyland, 2002). It provides individuals with discretion over the location where they will work. Consequently, employees may relocate themselves to a position where they may be physically present with their children or families at various time during the day.

Another common form of flexible work arrangement is flextime, which refers to the flexibility associated with scheduling the work day (Allen et al., 2013). Flextime allows employees to alter the times at which they will perform their jobs; however, they are still responsible for working the designated length of time (Higgins, Duxbury, & Julien, 2014). Past research has often failed to differentiate between the two forms of flexibility, with some studies using them in conjunction and others retaining flexibility in either place or time (Allen et al., 2013).

The necessity of separating the two forms of flexible work arrangements is emphasized by Allen et al. (2013), who have noted that flexplace and flextime are not interchangeable and that combining the two forms may lead to inconsistent outcomes. Allen et al. (2013) have suggested that flextime may be more beneficial than flexplace in the reduction of work-family conflict. They propose that flexplace — working remotely

from one's home or alternate location — may blur the boundaries between work and home, which is likely to cause more crossover between roles and less sense of control (Allen et al., 2013). Some current research has suggested that the relationship between flextime and work-family conflict is stronger than the relationship between flexplace and work-family conflict (Byron, 2005).

Flexibility availability and flexibility use. In the literature, there has been a further examination of the availability versus the use of flexible work arrangements. Studies have often gathered information from participants inquiring whether or not flextime or flexplace exists in their organizations; however, the availability of such an arrangement does not necessitate its use (Allen et al., 2013). Grover and Crooker (1995) found that the presence of a flexible work arrangement alone was enough to be associated with employee positive outcomes such as positive job attitudes. Employees who have flexible work arrangements available to them experience a positive shift in attitudes toward their employers, viewing them in a more supportive light because the offering portrays a care for employees (Batt & Valcour, 2003). Furthermore, the availability of flexible work arrangements can be viewed as an organizational resource that helps reduce pressure for individuals with competing demands (Allen et al., 2013). The availability of flexibility may help increase perceptions of psychological control, or one's ability to choose their actions, which may reduce work-family conflict (Allen et al., 2013).

Flexible work arrangement use in comparison to flexible work arrangement availability is proposed to build upon the positive impact of flexible work arrangements availability and further assist individuals in structuring their time in ways that will help

alleviate conflict with other areas of life (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006). In their meta-analysis, Allen et al. (2013) found that flexplace use was a stronger predictor for reducing work-to-family conflict than flexplace availability. However, they also found that flextime availability had a greater impact in reducing work-to-family conflict than flextime use. This variation in the ability of the different forms of flexible work arrangements (flextime and flexplace and availability and use) in reducing work-to-family conflict is suggested to occur due to the perception of control that the availability of flexible work arrangements provides to an individual about their time. The actual use of a flexible work arrangement, as opposed to flexible work availability, may increase or decrease one's actual control depending on the context in which flexible work arrangements are used, which impact the effectiveness of flexible work arrangement in reducing work-to-family conflict (Allen et al., 2013). Therefore, in the examination of flexible work arrangements in this study, a distinction between use and availability is made to examine whether the mere presence of availability may suffice in reducing work-to-family conflict. The following hypotheses are tested.

Hypothesis 1: Flexplace availability will be negatively associated with work-to-family conflict.

Hypothesis 2: Flextime availability will be negatively associated with work-to-family conflict.

Hypothesis 3: Flexplace use will be negatively associated with work-to-family conflict.

Hypothesis 4: Flextime use will be negatively associated with on work-to-family conflict.

Moderators of the Relationship Between Flexible Work Arrangements and Work-to-Family Conflict

With the potential for flexible work arrangements to reduce work-to-family conflict, it is important to understand the various individual differences which may influence the relationship as the beneficial effects of flexible work arrangements may differ depending on an individual's characteristics. Research has investigated a number of moderators that have an impact upon the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work-to-family conflict. Individual characteristics have been examined as moderators of the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work-to-family conflict, including demographic characteristics (Allen et al., 2013). For example, gender has been examined as a moderator, finding that females with flexible work arrangements experience less work-to-family conflict than men with flexible work arrangements. Therefore, women experience greater benefit from flexible work arrangements as they are given more control over the allotment of their time between work and family. However, Allen et al. (2013) found little support for this gender difference in work-to-family conflict in their meta-analysis.

Further, parental status has been another area of interest. It is proposed that those who have children in the home benefit from a workplace which provides flexible work arrangements. Individuals with children face a greater number of demands in the home than those who do not have children, and therefore, the flexibility allows for accommodation of necessary tasks (Shockley & Allen, 2007). Allen et al. (2013) found

that those with a larger number of parental responsibilities were more likely to benefit from flexible work arrangements and experience less work-to-family conflict than those with no or a smaller number of parental responsibilities. Thus, individuals with a greater amount of parental responsibility are less likely to experience work-to-family conflict when offered and utilizing flexible work arrangements as they have more freedom to tailor their work lives to fit with family life, reducing the incompatibility between the roles.

A moderator which has not received much attention in literature is self-control. Allen et al. (2013) called for an examination of self-control or self-regulation when studying flexibility. They called for the use of self-control theory in the examination of the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work-to-family conflict to further explain individual differences in experience of flexible work arrangement. The researchers suggested that the use of flexible work arrangements is a form of resource allocation in which individuals must decide where to focus their attention and effort. Therefore, having a flexible work arrangement may require that resources be spread over a greater number of domains simultaneously (work and home). This spread of resources can lead to a decrease in performance in those domains and overall work and personal life satisfaction (Allen et al., 2013). Self-control is also an individual difference variable in which people vary on the amount of self-control they have. In an effort to further understand what individual differences contribute to the effects of flexible work arrangements with regards to reducing work-to-family conflict, self-control is examined.

Self-Control

Researchers have conceptualized self-control as a resistance to distraction and impulse control and it has been hypothesized that self-control will have an impact on the effectiveness of flexible work arrangements in reducing work-to-family conflict due to the introduction of external distractors and greater need for self-regulation when both working remotely and at various hours (Allen et al., 2013; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000).

Muraven and Baumeister (2000) define self-control as an ability of individuals to suppress or control their natural instinct or reaction. Rather than giving in to an impulse which naturally occurs, some level of effort is given to changing or stopping a certain behavior. These researchers believe that self-control is like a muscle which can be exerted and also exhausted to a level at which it is less effective. They also suggest that self-control is a limited resource and only a finite number of acts can be controlled before negative effects occur. Therefore, self-control theory states that those low in self-control are likely to act impulsively in accordance to their desires and are unable to delay gratification; on the other hand, those higher in self-control are able to resist their urges and work toward long-term gratification (Valasik, 2014).

As self-control is an internal resource which plays a part in maintaining focus, it has been theorized to play a role in how an individual experiences a flexible work arrangement. Flexible work arrangements increase the amount of self-control individuals have over their working hours, thus necessitating them to make more decisions regarding their daily activity (Allen et al., 2013; Golembiewski, Yeager, & Hilles, 1975). It has

been suggested that this increase in decision making reduces an individual's personal resources, which might act as a detriment to self-control (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998). Having to make too many decisions may increase uncertainty and cognitive overload, making the individual's allotted work harder to manage (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000). The flexibility of schedule offered by organizations may create self-control demands in terms of controlling impulses, resisting distractions, and overcoming inner resistances to staying on task (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000; Schmidt & Neubach, 2007). When working from home or taking advantage of flexplace use, individuals may need to resist the desire to perform chores such as laundry and rely on self-control to remain focused on a task as opposed to becoming distracted by their surroundings.

Self-control as a moderator of the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work-to-family conflict can be examined through the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). The COR theory is based on the idea that individuals seek to engage in environmental and situational circumstances that will help enrich their personal and social resources and avoid situations that will lead to a loss of personal and social resources. Therefore, individuals will work to sustain their resources, here defined as personal characteristics, or energies valued by the individual, such as self-control, which serve to benefit their path to the accomplishment of goals and strive to avoid situations that would lead to a loss of these resources. However, in cases of stress, an individual may experience a decrease in resources in one domain, creating a demand to replace or replenish these resources by detracting from another aspect of an individual's life. Hobfoll's (1989) model suggests that those who deplete greater levels of self-control

in one aspect of life are less able to effectively allocate their remaining self-control resources to other areas. This reduction in self-control therefore decreases the effectiveness of utilizing a flexible work arrangement.

In an experiment by Muraven, Tice, and Baumeister (1998), it was found that in stressful situations where simultaneous acts of self-control were required, the performance of the subsequent act was impaired. The researchers performed an experiment to examine the resource of self-control. In the first study, they examined the impact of affect regulation in a stressful situation on performance of a muscular endurance task. In the study, participants were asked to either elevate or suppress their emotional response as an act of self-control while watching an upsetting movie, whereas participants in the control group were not instructed to alter their affect. Following the viewing, the groups were asked to perform the physical task of squeezing a handgrip to test their stamina. The researchers found that those who had engaged in emotional regulatory or control efforts did not perform as well in the physical task, suggesting that depletion in the emotional realm led to a depletion in one's ability to maintain strength in a later task. Therefore, the more tasks which require control, the fewer resources available to dedicate to each act, which is likely to decrease the quality of performance (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Finally, Muraven and Baumeister (2000) suggested that the effectiveness of performance also depends on each person's level of self-control. This level may vary among individuals, such that some are stronger when it comes to self-control than others. When a resource such as self-control has been depleted too greatly, an individual may experience a greater level of stress and become more susceptible to

distraction. Distractions may in turn be perceived as a stressor due to the lack of resource to manage the occurrence of the stimulus (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000).

Due to the impact of employing self-control on the ability to resist subsequent distractions, Allen et al. (2013) suggested self-control may be an important moderator of the assumed positive impact of flexible work arrangements. When working remotely or having greater control over working experience, more choices must be made regarding time and location, and a stronger resistance to outside distractors is needed. Working remotely may challenge impulse control and resisting distractions which require internal resources. The use of self-control in one realm depletes the availability of this internal resource for focus on work, potentially decreasing effectiveness and quality of work during that time (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000; Muraven et al., 1998).

Maintaining focus on work while utilizing flexplace when children, chores, family, or even television are present may be more difficult for those with lower levels of self-control than for those with higher levels of self-control, which might lead to greater stress and more work-to-family conflict for those with lower self-control. With regards to flextime use, an employee will need to make decisions during working hours, resisting distractions such as the desire to attend an afterschool sporting event for a child. Seeing as individuals are proposed to have varying levels of self-control strength, resisting such external factors may lead to greater stress and poorer work quality for those with less self-control than those with greater self-control.

Research has yet to fully explore self-control as a moderator of the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work-family conflict, therefore, the present

study hopes to address this gap. Those with a greater level of self-control should have a larger pool of resources from which to manage their impulse and therefore perform better on work-based tasks despite being around distracting factors in both flexplace and flextime use.

Hypothesis 5: Self-control will moderate the relationship between flexplace use and work-to-family conflict such that the relationship between flexplace use and work-to-family conflict will be more negative among those with high self-control than those with low self-control.

Hypothesis 6: Self-control will moderate the relationship between flextime use and work-to-family conflict such that the relationship between flextime use and work-to-family conflict will be more negative among those with high self-control than those with low self-control.

The Present Study

With all the focus on flexible work arrangements in the workplace and their apparent desirability from employees as a resource to manage work-to-family conflict, it seems crucial that their effects need to be more fully explored and understood. Presently, there is inconsistency in the findings on flexible work arrangements' impacts and researchers continue to realize the need to differentiate the ways in which flexible work arrangements are defined (i.e., flexplace versus flextime, flexible work availability versus flexible work use).

This study aims to help fill some of the gaps in the research through looking at the impact of both the use and availability of flexibility separately on work-to-family

conflict. Flexibility in this study is conceptualized as both flexplace and flextime as many organizations use both in conjunction with one another. Furthermore, with more employees working from locations other than their offices, it is suggested there may be more distractions in their environment, subsequently requiring a greater amount of self-control in order to remain focused. As suggested by Muraven and Baumeister (2000), individuals have varying levels of self-control to begin with and self-control is a resource which can be depleted with use. Therefore, it is important that we understand the relationship between self-control and an employee's use of flexible work arrangements. Thus far in the literature, there has not been an in-depth investigation of self-control as a moderator and the impact it has upon the relationship between work flexibility and work-to-family conflict. This study intends to add to the literature in this space.

Method

Participants

A total of 152 participants responded to an online survey. Due to incomplete data, 21 participants were removed from further analyses. Therefore, the final sample consisted of 131 participants. These participants were drawn from two sources: 1) employees from a Northern California multinational consulting firm where I previously worked, and 2) my personal social network (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook).

Demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 1. The sample consisted of 61.5% ($n = 80$) females and 36.9% ($n = 48$) males. The participants' ages ranged from 21 years to over 60 years with half of the sample reporting 21–30 years (44.6%, $n = 58$), followed by 51–60 years (26.9%, $n = 35$). Thus, a majority of the sample was relatively young in terms of working age. In terms of organizational tenure, an equal number of participants, 29.2% ($n = 38$) had been at their organizations for 1–2 years or more than 10 years, followed by newly employed individuals who had been at their organizations for less than a year (20%, $n = 26$).

A similar percentage of participants were married (48.5%, $n = 63$) or not married (43.1%, $n = 56$). Most participants (69.8%, $n = 90$) reported having no children in the home. The sample had individuals employed at various levels within their organizations, with many individuals being between entry level and management (23.8%, $n = 31$) and entry level (22.3%, $n = 29$). A majority of the sample were full-time employees (90.0%, $n = 117$), with the remainder holding various types of employment arrangements.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Participants

	Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Age	21-30 years	58	44.6%
	31-40 years	13	10.0%
	41-50 years	16	12.3%
	51-60 years	35	26.9%
	Over 60 years	8	6.2%
Gender	Male	48	36.9%
	Female	80	61.5%
	Prefer not to state	2	1.5%
Organizational Tenure	Less than a year	26	20.0%
	1-2 years	38	29.2%
	3-4 years	17	13.1%
	5-10 years	11	8.5%
	More than 10 years	38	29.2%
Marital Status	Married	63	48.5%
	Not married	56	43.1%
	Other	11	8.5%
Children in Home	Yes	39	30.2%
	No	90	69.8%
Level of Employment	Administrative	9	6.9%
	Entry level	29	22.3%
	Between entry level and management	31	23.8%
	Middle management	26	20.0%
	Upper management	10	7.7%
	Executive	3	2.3%
	Other	22	16.9%
Employment Status	Part-time	10	7.7%
	Full-time	117	90.0%
	Contract	1	0.8%
	Intern	2	1.5%

Flexplace Availability	Yes	81	61.8%
	No	50	38.2%
Flextime Availability	Yes	88	67.2%
	No	43	32.8%
Flexplace Use	0 days a week	31	38.8%
	1 day a week	23	28.7%
	2 days a week	10	12.5%
	3 days a week	3	3.8%
	4 days a week	1	1.3%
	5 days a week	12	15.0%
Flextime Use	0 days a week	20	23.0%
	1 day a week	12	13.8%
	2 days a week	19	21.8%
	3 days a week	12	13.8%
	4 days a week	3	3.4%
	5 days a week	21	24.1%

Note. $N = 131$.

With respect to flexible work arrangements, 61.8% ($n = 81$) and 67.2% ($n = 88$) of the participants reported that their organizations had flexplace and flextime available to them, respectively. Among those who had flexplace available in their organizations, the largest group chose not to take advantage of flexplace (38.8%, $n = 31$), with the fewest using flexplace four days a week (1.3%, $n = 1$). Therefore, a majority of the sample used flexplace to a moderate degree. Among those who had flextime available at their organizations, the largest group was that of those who utilized flextime five days a week (24.1%, $n = 21$), with the fewest using flextime four days a week (3.4%, $n = 3$). Thus, a majority of the sample had a higher usage of flextime.

Measures

Flexible work arrangements. Four items were created to measure which kind of flexible work arrangements organizations offered and whether or not participants utilized the flexible work arrangements. The items measuring flexplace were, “Is flexplace offered at your organization? (Flexplace is the option to work from a location other than your designated office space)” with response options of “yes, *flexplace is offered at my organization*” or “no, *flexplace is not offered at my organization*” and “If flexplace is offered at your organization, on average, how often do you take advantage of it?” The response categories for the second question were 1 = “*I choose not to work remotely*,” 2 = “*I work remotely 1 day a week*,” 3 = “*I work remotely 2 days a week*,” 4 = “*I work remotely 3 days a week*,” 5 = “*I work remotely 4 days a week*,” and 6 = “*I work remotely 5 days a week*.”

There were an additional two items inquiring about flextime. The flextime items were, “Is flextime offered at your organization? (Flextime is the ability to work outside of the typical working hours)” with response options “*yes, flextime is offered at my organization*” or “*no, flextime is not offered at my organization*” and “If flextime is offered at your organization, on average, how often do you take advantage of it?” The response options for the second flextime question were 1 = “*I choose not to utilize flextime,*” 2 = “*I utilize flextime 1 day a week,*” 3 = “*I utilize flextime 2 days a week,*” 4 = “*I utilize flextime 3 days a week,*” 5 = “*I utilize flextime 4 days a week,*” and 6 = “*I utilize flextime 5 days a week.*”

Work-to-family conflict. Work-to-family conflict was measured utilizing The Work-Family Conflict Scale (Netemeyer et al., 1996). The Work-Family Conflict Scale is a five-item measure, examining how work interferes with family. The items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1= *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). Sample items were “Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities” and “Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.” The participants’ responses were averaged to create an overall work-to-family conflict score in which higher scores indicated a higher level of work-to-family conflict. Cronbach’s alpha (internal consistency) demonstrated high reliability of the scale ($\alpha = .94$).

Self-control. Self-control is defined by Muraven and Baumeister (2000) as an individual’s ability to suppress or control their natural instinct or reaction. It was measured with the Self-Control Scale (Cochran, 2016). The scale consists of six sub-

sections including impulsivity, simple tasks, risk-taking, physicality, self-centeredness, and anger. However, only items from two of the sub-sections were used, impulsivity and simple tasks, as the other four sub-sections were not relevant for this study. Thus, a total of 11 items were used to measure self-control and they were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1= *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). Sample items included “When things get complicated, I tend to quit or withdraw” and “I often do whatever brings me pleasure now, even at the cost of some distant goal.” Participants’ responses were reverse coded such that higher scores indicated a higher level of self-control. Cronbach’s alpha demonstrated high reliability of the scale ($\alpha = .82$).

Demographic information. Participants were also asked to respond to questions regarding their demographic information. The questions asked about age, gender, organizational tenure, marital status, presence of children at home, current level of employment within their organizations, and employment status.

Procedure

The study was conducted online with the survey hosted on the internet platform Qualtrics. Participants were informed of the study through a company email or social media sites, LinkedIn and Facebook, and followed a posted link to the consent page of the survey. The email was sent out from the Regional Vice President – West to the employees of the multinational consulting firm in their Western Region with offices located in Northern California, Oregon, and Washington. The email asked for support in completing my research project and asked for five to ten minutes of the participants’ time. They were also informed of the anonymity and confidentiality of the survey.

Participants were then asked to follow the link in the email to the consent page to participate in the study if they were over the age of 18 and employed.

Those who were approached via social media were presented with the same statement requesting assistance and support in completing my research and ensured of their anonymity and confidentiality. The message requesting participation was presented on LinkedIn and Facebook. From here, participants were asked to follow the link embedded in the posts which directed them to Qualtrics for the informed consent.

Participants who consented to the survey were then taken through survey items pertaining to flexible work arrangements, work-to-family conflict, followed by self-control and demographics. Instructions on each page asked participants to answer to the best of their abilities as there were no correct or incorrect answers. Participants who did not consent to participate were then taken to the end of the survey where they were thanked for their time and asked to share the link with individuals in their networks who might be interested in participating in the research study. The survey was open for three weeks. The data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 23). Pearson's correlations were used to examine the strength of the relationships between the variables. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the mean differences for the hypotheses. All of the hypotheses were tested using a Type I error rate of .05.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Means and standard deviations for the measured variables and Pearson's correlations examining the strength of the relationships between the variables are presented in Table 2. Participants reported that they used flexplace on average one day a week ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 1.13$). The average use of flextime by participants was between one day a week and two days a week ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.27$). Participants reported a moderate level of work-to-family conflict ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.60$). Ratings of respondent's self-control were moderately high, indicating a relatively strong perception of high self-control ($M = 5.30$, $SD = 0.82$).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlations Among Variables (N = 74 to 131)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Flexplace availability	--	--	--					
2. Flexplace use	2.00	1.13	.29 **	--				
3. Flextime availability	--	--	.52 ***	.05	--			
4. Flextime use	2.60	1.27	.06	.31 **	.44 ***	--		
5. Work-to-family conflict	3.96	1.60	-.12	.05	-.06	.35 **	(.94)	
6. Self-control	5.30	.82	.03	-.20	.18 *	-.05	-.13	(.82)

Note. N = 74 to 131.

Flexplace availability and flextime availability were coded 1 for available and 0 for not available.

Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) are in parentheses along the diagonal.

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Correlations

Flexplace availability and flexplace use had a weak and positive relationship, $r(92) = .29, p < .01$, such that those who had flexplace available to them used flexplace.

Flexplace availability and flextime availability had a strong and positive relationship, $r(129) = .52, p < .01$, indicating those who had flexplace available were also likely to have flextime available at their organizations.

Flexplace use and flextime use had a moderate and positive relationship, $r(85) = .31, p < .01$, such that participants who utilized flexplace were more likely to utilize flextime as well. Flextime availability had a moderately strong, positive, relationship with flextime use, $r(98) = .44, p < .01$, suggesting that those who had flextime available were likely to utilize flextime. Flextime availability also had a weak and positive relationship with self-control, $r(129) = .18, p < .05$, indicating that those who had flextime available were likely to have slightly higher levels of self-control. Flextime use had a moderate and positive relationship with work-to-family conflict, $r(85) = .35, p < .01$, such that those who utilized flextime more frequently reported that they experienced a greater level of work-to-family conflict.

Overall, these results indicated that organizations that had flextime were also more likely to have flexplace. Those who had flexible work arrangements available in their organizations (i.e., flexplace and flextime) were likely to utilize them. Those who had flextime available were more likely to have higher levels of self-control. Finally, those who used flextime more often were likely to experience a greater amount of work-to-family conflict.

Tests of Hypotheses

As previously mentioned, all of the hypotheses were tested using Type I error rate of .05. Hypothesis 1 stated that flexplace availability would be negatively associated with work-to-family conflict. To test this hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. Results showed that those who did not have flexplace available experienced more work-to-family conflict ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.71$) than those who had flexplace available to them ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.52$). However, these results were not statistically significant, $F(1,129) = 1.78$, $p > .05$. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 stated that flextime availability would be negatively associated with work-to family conflict. This hypothesis was tested with a one-way ANOVA. Results showed that those who did not have flextime available experienced a higher level of work-to-family conflict ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.59$) than those who had flextime available ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.61$). However, results were not statistically significant, $F(1,129) = .52$, $p > .05$. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Hypothesis 3 stated that flexplace use would be negatively associated with work-to-family conflict. Hypothesis 5 stated that self-control would moderate the relationship between flexplace use and work-to-family conflict such that the relationship between flexplace use and work-to-family conflict would be more negative among those with high self-control than those with low self-control. These hypotheses were tested with a 4 (flexplace use: 0, 1 day a week, 2 days a week, 3 or more days a week) x 2 (self-control: low vs. high) ANOVA. The scores of the participants' self-control were median split to

create groups of low and high self-control. Tables 3 and 4 show descriptive statistics and an ANOVA summary table, respectively.

Results showed that those who utilized flexplace two days a week experienced the highest amount of work-to-family conflict ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.44$), while those who utilized flexplace one day a week experienced the lowest level of work-to-family conflict ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.45$). Further, individuals with low self-control who used flexplace two days a week experienced the highest level of work-to-family conflict ($M = 5.16$, $SD = .84$), while those who had high self-control and used flexplace one day a week experienced the least work-to-family conflict ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.23$).

However, results showed no significant effect of flexplace use on work-to-family conflict, $F(3,69) = 2.21$, $p > .05$, nor an interaction effect between flexplace use and self-control, $F(3, 69) = .71$, $p > .05$. Thus, these results did not support either Hypothesis 3 or Hypothesis 5.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Work-to-Family Conflict by Flexplace Use and Self-Control

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Low Self-Control			
I choose not to work remotely	15	3.71	1.00
I work remotely 1 day a week	10	3.46	1.72
I work remotely 2 days a week	5	5.16	.84
I work remotely 3 or more days a week	9	3.98	1.49
High Self-Control			
I choose not to work remotely	15	3.80	1.78
I work remotely 1 day a week	11	3.11	1.23
I work remotely 2 days a week	5	4.40	1.90
I work remotely 3 or more days a week	7	3.43	1.94

Table 4

ANOVA Summary Table for Work-to-Family Conflict by Flexplace Use and Self-Control

Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Flexplace Use	15.18	3	5.06	2.21
Self-Control	2.51	1	2.51	1.10
Flexplace Use x Self-Control	1.93	3	.64	.28
Error	157.80	69	2.29	

Note: $R^2 = .11$, adj. $R^2 = .02$, * $p < .05$

Hypothesis 4 stated flextime use would be negatively associated with work-to-family conflict. Hypothesis 6 stated that self-control would moderate the relationship between flextime use and work-to-family conflict such that the relationship between flextime use and work-to-family conflict would be more negative among those with high self-control than those with low self-control. These hypotheses were tested with a 4 (flexplace use: 'I choose not to use flextime,' 'I use flextime 1 day a week,' 'I use flextime 2 days a week,' 'I use flextime 3 or more days a week') x 2 (self-control: low vs. high) ANOVA. The scores of the participants' self-control were median split to create groups of low and high self-control. Tables 5 and 6 show descriptive statistics and an ANOVA summary table, respectively.

Results showed a significant effect of flextime on work-to-family conflict, $F(3,74) = 6.39, p = .001$. Further analysis showed that only those who chose not to utilize flextime ($M = 2.75, SD = 1.36$) experienced a significantly lower work-to-family conflict than those who utilized flextime three or more days a week ($M = 4.41, SD = 1.37$). These results were contrary to the hypothesis which stipulated that those who chose to use flextime would experience less work-to-family conflict than those who chose not to use flextime. Thus, the results did not support Hypothesis 4.

Table 5 also shows that those with low self-control who used flextime three or more days a week experienced most work-to-family conflict ($M = 4.74, SD = .87$), while those who had high self-control and chose not to use flextime experienced the least amount of work-to-family conflict ($M = 2.11, SD = 1.01$). However, there was no significant

interaction between flextime use and self-control, $F(3, 74) = .73, p > .05$. Thus, Hypothesis 6 was not supported.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Work-to-Family Conflict by Flextime Use and Self-Control

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Low Self-Control			
I choose not to use flextime	10	3.20	1.45
I use flextime 1 day a week	6	2.83	1.78
I use flextime 2 days a week	9	4.38	1.59
I use flextime 3 or more days a week	17	4.74	.87
High Self-Control			
I choose not to use flextime	7	2.11	1.01
I use flextime 1 day a week	5	3.40	2.02
I use flextime 2 days a week	9	3.64	1.61
I use flextime 3 or more days a week	19	4.12	1.67

Table 6

ANOVA Summary Table for Work-to-Family Conflict by Flextime Use and Self-Control

Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Flextime Use	41.58	3	13.86	6.39*
Self-Control	3.74	1	3.74	1.73
Flextime Use x Self-Control	4.76	3	1.59	.73
Error	160.53	74	2.17	

Note: $R^2 = .24$, adj. $R^2 = .17$, * $p < .05$

Overall, the results did not support the hypotheses of this study. Although results showed that those who had flexplace available to them and who had flextime available to them experienced less work-family conflict than those who did not have either flexplace or flextime available to them, these results were not statistically significant. Furthermore, there was no significant effect of flexplace use on work-to-family conflict. Results showed an effect of flextime use on work-to-family conflict such that those who chose not to use flextime experienced significantly less work-to-family conflict than those who used flextime three or more days a week. This was contrary to my hypothesis which postulated that those who used flextime would experience less work-to-family conflict than those who chose not to use flextime. Finally, self-control did not moderate the relationship between flexplace use nor flextime use and family-to-work conflict. Thus, an individuals' level of self-control (high or low) were not related to their experience of work-to-family conflict whether they used flexplace or flextime.

Discussion

Flexible work arrangements are becoming widely offered in organizations as a potential resource for reducing work-family conflict (Executive Office of the President Council of Economic Advisors, 2014). As they become a more popular practice, research has focused on understanding the impact of flexible work arrangements on work-family conflict to discover whether they are in fact a viable solution to this stressor. Presently, studies have found mixed results in terms of how flexible work arrangements impact work-family conflict. For example, some studies (e.g., Allen et al., 2013) showed that those who had flexplace available experienced less work-family conflict, whereas others (e.g., Pickshaus et al., 2001) found that the use of flexible work arrangements had negative effects on employees, leading to an increase in work load or an unintentional increase in worked hours.

It has been argued that two possible reasons for these inconsistent findings are: 1) a lack of distinguishing the different forms of flexible work arrangements and thus, their potential different effects on work-family conflict and 2) neglect to fully examine individual differences as factors in their impact (Allen et al., 2013). Therefore, the present study aimed to be more specific in the examination of the type of flexible work arrangement used and its impact on work-family conflict measured. The present study focused on whether or not flexplace and flextime availability would have a positive impact upon work-to-family conflict, whether flexplace and flextime use would have a positive impact upon work-to-family conflict, and finally whether the individual

characteristic of self-control would contribute to the impact of flexplace and flextime use on work-to-family conflict.

Summary of Findings

Hypothesis 1 stated that flexplace availability would be negatively associated with work-to-family conflict. Although the results showed that those who had flexplace available to them experienced a lower level of work-to-family conflict than those who did not have flexplace available, the results were not statistically significant.

Hypothesis 2 stated that flextime availability would be negatively associated with work-to family conflict. Again, although the results showed that those who had flextime available to them experienced a lower level of work-to-family conflict than those who did not have flextime available to them, these results were not statistically significant. The lack of support for Hypotheses 1 and 2 might be due to the variability of the sample. Flexplace availability and flextime availability had large standard deviations, suggesting there may be other factors influencing the relationships.

Hypothesis 3 stated that flexplace use would be negatively associated with work-to-family conflict. Results did not show the hypothesized relationship between flexplace use and work-to-family conflict. Thus, this hypothesis was not supported. A potential reason for the lack of support of this hypothesis may be that flexplace did not actually help to relieve work-to-family conflict. Having some freedom in work location may have a greater impact upon work-life balance as opposed to the conflict experienced between the work and home domain. The ability to work remotely could function more as an employee desire as opposed to a resource in dealing with work-to-family conflict.

Hypothesis 4 stated that flextime use would be negatively associated with work-to-family conflict. The results found that those who chose not to use flextime experienced significantly less work-to-family conflict than those who used flextime three or more days a week. Thus, this hypothesis was not supported. In fact, the results were the opposite of what I hypothesized. A potential reason why those who chose not to use flextime experienced less work-to-family conflict than those who used it three or more days a week may be that the availability of flextime was sufficient in relieving some stress. The availability of flextime may have been enough for employees to experience support and relieve stress as the organization demonstrated an ability to accommodate the needs of the employee's personal life. Therefore, the benefit of flextime use may not be directly related to the amount of flextime used.

Further, a potential explanation for the greater amount of work-to-family conflict experienced by those who used flextime three or more days a week may be that employees were working later hours. If flextime is being used to work later in the day or in evenings, work may intrude upon sleeping hours. If using flextime does encroach on time for sleep, overall well-being may be impacted by the lack of sleep. For those who use flextime in this manner repeatedly throughout the week, this could take a toll. In addition, if those using flextime were using flextime later in the day and had children, they might have been missing extracurricular activities that occur in the afternoons. Repeatedly doing so may take a toll on their overall satisfaction as well. However, in the present study, I did not ask at what times participants were using flextime. Therefore, these interpretations are speculative.

Hypothesis 5 stated that self-control would moderate the relationship between flexplace use and work-to-family conflict such that the relationship between flexplace use and work-to-family conflict would be more negative among those with high self-control than those with low self-control. Results did not show an interaction between flexplace use and self-control on work-to-family conflict. Thus, the hypothesis was not supported. However, somewhat consistent with the hypothesis, the pattern of the means showed that those who chose to use flexplace one day a week, two days a week, and three or more days a week and had high self-control experienced less work-to-family conflict than those who chose to use flexplace one day a week, two days a week, and three or more days a week, and had low self-control, respectively.

The lack of support for this hypothesis may be due to the nature of the environment at work and the environment when using flexplace. Many workplaces are moving to open space workspaces, reducing dividers and walls between employees in an effort to facilitate collaboration (Schwab, 2019). This change in the environment at work may mean that individuals are required to utilize the same amount of self-control at work to focus as they would in a public space outside of work. It may even be that those who worked remotely had fewer distractions present, and thus, required less self-control to focus compared to those who were in their open workplace. However, in the present study, I did not ask where participants were working when using flexplace or ask about their office environments at their organizations. Thus, this interpretation is speculative and requires further study.

Finally, Hypothesis 6 stated that self-control would moderate the relationship between flextime use and work-to-family conflict such that the relationship between flextime use and work-to-family conflict would be more negative among those with high self-control than those with low self-control. Results showed no interaction between flextime use and self-control on work-to-family conflict. Thus, the hypothesis was not supported. The lack of support may be attributed to the fact that flextime on its own did not impact the work environment. Flextime is merely a shift in the daily working hours which does not necessarily change an individual's work environment. This means that those who use flextime are in the same environment they would be in if they were working standard hours and therefore, the participants may not require more self-control to focus on their activities thus having no impact on work-to-family conflict.

Theoretical Implications

Although not statistically significant, the results of the present study were somewhat consistent with Allen et al. (2013) such that those who had flexplace available and flextime available experienced less work-to-family conflict than those who did not have these kinds of work arrangements available. Thus, the availability of flexible work arrangements alone may be enough to reduce employees' work-to-family conflict. This finding is consistent with Grover and Crooker (1995) who found that the presence of a flexible work arrangement alone was enough to be associated with employee positive outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction). Consistent with Allen et al.'s (2013) assertion, the availability of flexible work arrangements can be seen as a resource that helps reduce stress or competing demands (personal obligations and work obligations). Thus, the

availability of flexible work arrangements help employees experience an increase in the perceived amount of control that they have over a situation. This perceived increase in control may help to reduce the employees' internal tension or conflict.

The results of the present study also demonstrated a significant effect of flextime use on work-to-family conflict. However, the nature of the findings was contrary to the findings of Allen et al. (2013). The current study found that those who used flextime three or more days a week experienced a significantly greater amount of work-to-family conflict than those who chose not to use flextime, while Allen et al. (2013) found that those who used flextime experienced less work-to-family conflict than those who did not use flextime. This leads to further questions regarding the way in which employees utilize and perceive flextime. Previous research has not yet been conclusive on the impact of flextime alone on work-family conflict. The present study shows that there may in fact be negative impacts on work-to-family when utilizing flextime beyond a certain amount.

Allen et al. (2013) called for the examination of personal characteristics such as self-control as moderators of the relationships between flexible work arrangements and work-to-family conflict. They suggested that an individual's level of self-control might impact the beneficial influence of flexible work arrangements on an individual's experience of work-to-family conflict. Following this line of thought, the current study hypothesized that self-control would interact with flexplace use and flextime use such that those with high self-control would experience a stronger impact with work-to-family conflict than those with low self-control. Results did not show support for these hypotheses. The results of this study may imply that self-control does not play an influencing role in one's

experience of work-to-family conflict when using flexible work arrangements and is not a major factor in these forms of flexible work arrangement.

Alternatively, when examining self-control as a moderator, the nature of a job, demographic information of participants (e.g., marital status, presence of children in the home) and condition of the workspace might also need to be considered. The environment an individual is in at work may be less optimal for them than their home set up. It may be necessary to take into account office floor plan (private office versus open floorplan) when determining how self-control plays a role in the relationship between working remotely and work-to-family conflict.

Practical Implications

The current study has some practical implications for organizations seeking to offer resources to their employees to address work-to-family conflict. As Allen et al. (2013) have discussed, there are various forms of flexible work arrangements organizations can offer to their employees which may have differing impacts upon work-to-family conflict. Thus, it is important to be mindful of what is offered. Flexplace may be beneficial for those who prefer to work in different environments, open floor plans, or public versus private offices. Flextime may be more beneficial for those who have children as opposed to those who do not. Further, this study indicates that simply providing flexibility may have a positive impact. Though the result was not significant, the offer of flexible work arrangement might be enough to reduce work-to-family conflict, because the offering is perceived as organizational support, regardless of whether employees actually make use of this support.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

The current study has several strengths. This study was one of the first to examine self-control as a moderator of the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work-to-family conflict. This allowed for greater insight into how one form of an employees' personal characteristics interacts with the growing trend of flexible work arrangements. This study also looked at flexible work arrangements in more detail. Previous studies have not always defined the various aspects of flexible work arrangements as they have only looked at flexible work arrangements one dimensionally, either employees have it or they do not or they use it or they do not. The present study dissected flexible work arrangements further and defined two of the different forms that it takes. By differentiating flexplace and flextime, I was able to investigate the different impacts each type had on the sample and demonstrate that flextime had a more potent impact upon work-to-family conflict than flexplace.

In addition to the strengths, the current study also had some limitations. As the design of the study was non-experimental, an actual causal statement between flexible work arrangements and experience of work-to-family conflict cannot be made. Another limitation of the study was the survey itself. In the survey, there were participants who answered that they did not have either flexplace, flextime, or both available to them, yet they proceeded to answer the question pertaining to their frequency of use of flexplace or flextime. This led to a need to further filter data with more scrutiny which left more room for error. If this were to be repeated, I would add survey logic that would automatically

move a participant past the question asking about their frequency of use if they answered that they did not have the forms of flexible work arrangements available.

Further, there was a lack of response categories for the demographic question, asking if the participants had children. There is a growing trend of adult children moving back into the homes of their parents or elderly parents living with their children. This adds a different form of stress from having young children in the home which could be of importance when looking at work-to-family conflict. Therefore, I would add a category asking if participants had adult children living in the home or parents in the home. Allowing for more response options in the children category could capture more of the nuance in family structure.

Future research should also strive for a larger sample size. Having a larger sample would increase the likelihood of achieving statistical significance, especially for an interaction effect, and capture a stronger representation of the workplace. Further, though the results did not yield significance, an interesting trend was identified in the flextime use condition. Those who used flextime one or two days a week and had low self-control appeared to experience less work-to-family conflict than those who had higher self-control and used flexplace one or two days a week. Thus, further examination of this trend would be interesting as previous research had suggested the opposite effect. Probing into the dimensions that lead those who use flextime to experience more work-to-family conflict could inform future business practices on when to offer and when to restrict use of flextime.

The current results were not conclusive regarding self-control's role in flexible work arrangements and work-to-family conflict. It would also be interesting to see how if there is another factor other than work-to-family conflict that is more strongly benefited by flexible work arrangements such as job satisfaction or work-life balance. Further, given that self-control was not an influencing factor, perhaps other demographic variables or personal characteristics would be. Finally, future research should look at how the experience of individuals who have and use both flexplace and flextime compare to that of those who have only flexplace or only flextime to add to a greater understanding of how the forms of flexible work arrangements interact and differ.

Conclusion

The goal of the current study was to further examine the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work-to-family conflict. The study found that those who engaged in flextime with greater frequency experienced a higher level of work-to-family conflict than those who choose to abstain. The study did not find any significant impact of self-control, suggesting this is not a personal characteristic that influences the relationship between flexplace use and flextime use and work-to-family conflict. Thus, organizations may use this to inform their decision to offer flextime to their employees. This study contributes to the gap in literature looking at personal characteristics and how they influence work-to-family conflict when using flexible work arrangements. This may help direct future researchers to look at other personal characteristics and separate out the forms of flexible work arrangements in their examinations of resources for reducing work-to-family conflict for individuals.

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Appendix
Flexible Work Arrangement Survey

Flexible Work:

Please select the option below which best reflects your work arrangement.

1. Is flexplace offered at your organization? (Flexplace is the option to work from a location other than your designated office space)
 - ☐ Yes, flexplace is offered at my organization
 - ☐ No, flexplace is not offered at my organization

2. If flexplace is offered at your organization, on average, how often do you take advantage of it?
 - ☐ I choose not to work remotely
 - ☐ I work remotely 1 day a week
 - ☐ I work remotely 2 days a week
 - ☐ I work remotely 3 days a week
 - ☐ I work remotely 4 days a week
 - ☐ I work remotely 5 days a week

3. Is flextime offered at your organization? (Flextime is the ability to work outside of the typical working hours)
 - ☐ Yes, flextime is offered at my organization
 - ☐ No, flextime is not offered at my organization

4. If flextime is offered at your organization, on average, how often do you take advantage of it?
 - ☐ I choose not to use flextime
 - ☐ I utilize flextime 1 day a week
 - ☐ I utilize flextime 2 days a week
 - ☐ I utilize flextime 3 days a week
 - ☐ I utilize flextime 4 days a week
 - ☐ I utilize flextime 5 days a week

Work-to-Family Conflict:

Please indicate the extent you agree or disagree with the statements below. There are no correct or incorrect answers.

5. The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
6. The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
7. Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
8. My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree

9. Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree

Self-Control

The following questions ask you about yourself. Please indicate the extent you agree or disagree with the statements below. There are no correct or incorrect answers.

10. I often act on the spur of the moment without stopping to think.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
11. I don't devote much thought and effort to preparing for my future.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
12. I often do whatever brings me pleasure here and now, even at the cost of some distant goal.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree

- Agree
- Strongly agree

13. I am more concerned with what happens to me in the short run than in the long run.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

14. I much prefer doing things that pay off right away rather than in the future.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

15. When I have a little extra money, I'm more likely to spend it on something I really don't need than to save it for the future.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

16. When things get complicated, I tend to quit or withdraw.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

17. The things in life that are easiest to do bring me the most pleasure.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

18. I dislike really hard tasks that stretch my abilities to the limit.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

19. If I had a choice, I would almost always do an easy task rather than a difficult one.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

20. A difficult task, in most cases, is not worth doing.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Demographics:

The following questions ask about your demographic information.

21. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 20 years of age
- ☐ 21 – 30 years of age
- ☐ 31 – 40 years of age
- ☐ 41 – 50 years of age
- ☐ 51 – 60 years of age
- ☐ Over 60 years of age

22. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other

23. How long have you been with your current organization?

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1 – 2 years
- ☐ 3 – 4 years
- ☐ 5 – 10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

24. What is your marital status?

- ☐ Married
- ☐ Not married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Widowed

25. Do you have children living in your home?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

26. What is your current organizational position?

- ☐ Administrative
- ☐ Entry level

- ☐ Between entry level/mid-management
- ☐ Middle management
- ☐ Upper management
- ☐ Executive
- ☐ Other

27. What is your current work arrangement? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Part-time
- ☐ Full-time
- ☐ Contract
- ☐ Intern